

The complaint

A business I will call 'T' complains that Credit Blaustein Limited (trading as 'Credit BLU') has restricted its account and is holding on to its money and failing to respond to enquiries asking for an explanation.

Mrs E is a person authorised to bring the complaint on behalf of T.

What happened

T wanted to base its business in an overseas country. In order to satisfy that country's business registration requirements and be able to open a bank account in that country, T was first required to deposit funds. In February 2024, Mrs E opened a corporate account for T with Credit BLU and deposited 12,600 EUR for this purpose.

Business registration was duly completed and T was able to open an overseas bank account. Mrs E said around June 2024 she instructed Credit BLU to transfer funds in T's account to T's overseas bank account and close T's account with Credit BLU.

When this didn't happen, Mrs E chased things up with Credit BLU. In November 2024, the account had been restricted and Credit BLU told Mrs E that T's money was still undergoing mandatory compliance checks by the team responsible and that it had no influence over that process. No further information has been provided to Mrs E.

Credit BLU didn't respond to Mrs E's complaint about the delay and lack of information and it didn't engage with us when our investigator asked Credit BLU to explain what was happening. Based on the available information, our investigator didn't think Credit BLU was holding T's money fairly. She recommended that Credit BLU should release T's money and pay interest from the date the transfer was requested.

In the absence of any response from Credit BLU, the complaint came to me for a final decision.

What I've decided – and why

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

I've carried out an independent review and having done so, I've reached the same conclusion as our investigator.

My findings are made on a balance of probabilities, in other words, what is more likely than not, based on the evidence provided by the parties.

We asked Credit Blu to tell us what's happening at its end and to respond to T's complaint. In the absence of any response from Credit BLU, our investigator considered the matter and then sent a copy of her view to Credit BLU.

When Credit BLU didn't respond, the investigator sent a further letter to Credit BLU saying that because it hadn't replied, an ombudsman would review the complaint and make a final decision.

There has been no response or other contact from Credit BLU on this matter.

Mrs E has provided copies of a statement and transaction record produced by Credit BLU confirming that funds were deposited in T's corporate account over a year ago. The account status is marked 'Restricted'.

As I understand the position, T's money is still being held by Credit BLU and Mrs E hasn't been able to find out any more information. T is incurring account fees meanwhile and not being able to access funds required to enable T to trade is impacting adversely on T.

A message thread between Mrs E and Credit BLU indicates that at least part of the delay was due to the need for Credit BLU to complete necessary compliance checks. But there's been no update on this for several months and the account is restricted so that T can neither deposit into the account nor access her money.

On balance, having regard to the information available, I am satisfied that Credit BLU is taking an unreasonable length of time to action T's instructions. And I can't fairly conclude on the basis of the information provided to me that Credit BLU is acting in a fair and reasonable way. It's not provided anything to us to support the extended delays or said it's submitted information to this effect.

For this reason, I am upholding this complaint.

Putting things right

I agree with the investigator that it's unfair that T is still waiting for Credit BLU to carry out its instructions to transfer funds out and close the account.

So Credit BLU should:

1. Pay T the amount of €12,150.00 and
2. pay 8% simple interest on the balance transferred from the date the transfer was requested to the date of settlement.

My final decision

I uphold this complaint and Credit Blaustein Limited should take the steps set out above to put things right.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask T to accept or reject my decision before 22 May 2025.

Susan Webb
Ombudsman